

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **For Immediate Release**

ELIZABETH POLICE DEPARTMENT

1 Police Plaza, Elizabeth, NJ 07201

Lt. Daniel Saulnier

Date: 8/26/2014

Follow Up on Hazmat and death at 595 Spring Street in Elizabeth on 8/25/2014.

An autopsy conducted today by the Union County Medical Examiner and an investigation by Elizabeth Police Detectives have found no reason to suspect foul play in the death of 32 year old Maria Fernandes of Newark NJ. Ms. Fernandes was found dead in her 2001 Kia Sportage in a parking lot of the Wawa Gas and convenience store. The official cause of death is pending toxological results. Ms. Fernandes was employed in several Dunkin Donuts in the area and the investigators found it was not unusual for her to park in a public access parking lot to get a few hours sleep between jobs. She was scheduled to lend her car to a friend two hours after she parked her vehicle in the WAWA parking lot, an appointment she unfortunately did not make. The Hazmat response was due to an initial assessment by Emergency Medical Technicians who responded to the request for medical assistance made by employees of the Wawa . Upon gaining access to the vehicle the first responders were met by a combination of fumes which Hazmat officials later determined included gasoline from a gas can that had apparently spilled in the rear of the vehicle. According to sources Ms. Fernandes carried the gas can because she had run out of gas on several occasions while commuting between jobs. Ms. Fernandes has family in Portugal who have been notified by police of her death.